

FELLOWSHIP



PROJECT WELL DONE in Clemson

Mothers in Zambia can now pump water from a well for their families' use rather than walking miles to the closest river, thanks to First Baptist Church Clemson.

Clemson's desire to build wells began in January when CBF field personnel Fran and Lonnie Turner visited the church to talk about their ongoing 'Water is Life' work in Zambia, providing clean water in a country where diarrhea is rampant. That project dovetailed nicely with the church's 2012 focus mission theme of health and led to the July-September emphasis on Project Well Done.

During that quarter, a churchwide effort to bring water and hygiene to rural communities in Zambia by raising \$6,000 for three wells was begun. CBFSC plastic water bottles were distributed to serve as 'collection reservoirs' for everyone—from youngest children to oldest senior. A model well was placed in the church Welcome Center and each Sunday individuals/families/classes were invited to bring their collected coins, bills, and checks and place them in the well. More than 65 bottles were used by FBC families and individuals.

Some examples of creative fundraising: preteens sold lemonade at a Clemson football game, children walked their neighborhoods and asked families to donate, and families cut expenses in purchasing water and instead placed those funds in the collection well.

At the end of the project, the church held a Fifth Sunday Fellowship celebrating Project Well Done; there, a personal letter was shared from the Turners and the total amount of funds raised to install new wells was revealed—total raised, \$12,638.68.

"Great news indeed to hear of Clemson's hard but ever so productive efforts in assisting us to bring hope to some of the most vulnerable people," Fran and Lonnie emailed.

"I think it truly was a project well done, and we had creative and engaged participation from our children, pre-teens, youth, students, adults, and seniors," said Casey Callahan, minister of students and mission. "The CBFSC plastic water bottles that we used enabled all ages to participate in a visual and noticeable way."

The Turners are presently overseeing the drilling of five wells and one borehole at a rural school of 350 children. This school is located in the area where the Turners had previously built a basketball court and maternity clinic.



ZAMBIA FACTS

40 children die every day from diarrhea

Diarrhea kills more children than malaria, AIDS and measles combined

13 million people live in Zambia

Forty-six percent of the population is under the age of 15.



At the time this photo was taken, FBC Clemson had raised \$11,733.59 for Project Well Done.

Judith White, chair of the FBC Mission Ministry Team, was sharing with her Esther Sunday School class after raising enough money to support one well. Turning to the prophet Isaiah, she read, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation!" (Isaiah 12:3)

FBC CLEMSON'S children were highly involved in Project Well Done. How did it feel to help raise money to build wells in Zambia?

"At first it seemed hard to do, but after we did it, it felt good to know that we were helping people."—8-year old Joann Walden



“Think deeply about prison ministry – pray about whether God is calling you to lead a group or participate in one. The blessings so greatly outweigh the task of overcoming such obstacles as fear and prejudice. One lesson shared, one prayer offered, one tear dried could open the locked door of a heart and lead to eternal freedom.”—Stephanie Patterson

Click—and the door slams shut

By Stephanie Totty Patterson



“Thud.” “Click.” These are sounds that can send chills down your spine when you visit a prison and hear the heavy door slam shut and lock behind you. How much more terrifying would those sounds be if you knew you could not leave in a few hours?

Many of us have never imagined what it is like for a prisoner. If we have never personally been an inmate or have had a relative convicted of a crime, then we usually hold the idea of incarceration at arm’s length. We tend to fall back on the old sentiment, “Do the crime – do the time.”

Justice is important and necessary for our society and our relationship with God, but we need to remember that the people serving their prison sentences are still the precious children of God. When we marginalize prison inmates, fail to imagine ourselves or a loved one in their position, or withhold our compassion, then we dehumanize someone’s father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter. These men and women in the correctional system are surely some of the “least of these” in our society, and we, as disciples of the One who put himself in their place, must find ways to show mercy to them.

Once we can recognize the need to reach out to those inside the walls of jails and prisons, we are then faced with the challenge of how to begin a ministry. There are many rules and regulations regarding visitation that are unique to each local, state, or federal institution and it is often a daunting task making sense of them all. The best way to nurture a sustainable ministry is to begin

with a reliable contact directly affiliated with an institution. A warden, chief correctional officer, police chief, or sheriff can answer questions about visitation and policies and also give some direction on setting up a regularly scheduled visitation. They can also provide information on volunteer training and give helpful insights on how to relate to prisoners. It is important to remember that there are often many roadblocks in gaining access to the inside of the correctional system, and we must be patient yet persistent to keep from getting discouraged.

Once we make a contact and set a routine in motion, we can become self-conscious in our choice of topic or curriculum. We might worry about seeming judgmental or self-righteous teaching a lesson about obedience or sin. The bright orange uniform reminds a prisoner every day of being caught making a mistake – should we bring up a subject that is sure to be a sensitive one?

Paul certainly did not shy away from these topics for he reminded us that we all fall terribly short of God’s glory. As long as we teach scripture in awareness of our flawed nature, we can share in the equality of all being recipients of grace. It is incredibly moving to hear the testimonies of those sitting around a table, and when we offer up our own story, God’s Spirit moves in this special communion. We can come away with hearts full of revelation concerning our own walk with the Lord. This experience often helps us gain a deeper insight into the absolute necessity of showing mercy just as we have been shown mercy.



Stephanie Totty Patterson, associate pastor at FBC, Lake View, leads a bi-weekly prison ministry for the female inmates of the Dillon County Jail. Several women from Lake View First Baptist Church participate on a rotating basis.

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO IMPACT LIVES OF PRISONERS—BUILD A CHAPEL

Allendale Correctional Institute is one of the few state prisons without a chapel. CBFSC is hoping to work with other groups to change that. Missions coordinator Beverly Greer has been asked to serve as a Star Advisor to promote fundraising efforts for the chapel. The U.S. Department of Justice has published material which says that religious instruction is one of the most powerful tools in the transformation of human lives, and that inmates who participate in faith-based prison programs are “motivated to make changes in their lives and are seeking their way in a religious sense.” At ACI, a 5 percent reduction in recidivism will prevent an estimated 65 inmates from returning to prison and save almost \$1,000,000 annually. For more information about how to help with this project, contact Beverly, beverly@cbfsc.org.



The peculiar preacher, Brett Younger

Rockin' in Beaufort (and that's not peculiar)

April 26-27, 2013

by Sue Poss, editor

It might seem that spring and our Annual General Assembly are way down the road but, no, the time will be here before we know it. If you haven't already, mark April 26-27 on your calendar and plan to be in the Beaufort area to celebrate another year of ministry in South Carolina by our Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, listen to some preaching, take care of some business, and as always, reconnect with CBFSC friends from all across the state.

We have a self-described "peculiar preacher" as our keynote speaker. That would be Brett Younger, who teaches preaching at McAfee School of Theology in Atlanta.

Brett preached not long ago at my church, FBC Greenville, but I was absent that day so I can't speak from personal experience as to how peculiar he really is. I did go to his blog (peculiarpreacher.com), where, in October, he quoted a bunch of preacher types with whom I am acquainted, including Ron Grizzle, former pastor in Simpsonville; and Jim King, former pastor in Aiken who addressed our assembly a couple of years ago.

Ron, according to Brett's blog, asked a really important question at a preacher gathering (they call them peer groups): "What difference would it have made to the Reformation if Martin Luther had been taking Prozac?"

After reading this blog entry, I was beginning to think maybe Brett was not the only peculiar preacher around.

While I missed hearing Brett when he was in Greenville, I will definitely be in Beaufort to hear him when he speaks twice to us as we are gathered at Tidal Creek Fellowship. I want to know what other preacher friends of mine he might quote. And you'll want to be there to see if your pastor makes the list.

Getting beyond the preaching, we'll also have Miss South Carolina Ali Rogers, who will give her testimony and sing; the choir from the Baptist Church of Beaufort; and the Tidal Creek Fellowship Praise Band. Of course, you can't go to the Low Country without hearing some Gullah singing. I was in Hilton Head at a conference in September where a Gullah Choir performed and they

were one of the highlights of the meeting. At our General Assembly we will have Ron and Natalie Daise, Gullah singers and storytellers, who will both entertain us and center us as we worship.

Leslie Rowell, who's coordinating our General Assembly, sent out an email saying "We will rock!" That makes me think that Brett might be able to write a blog entry about those peculiar South Carolina Baptists who enjoy worshipping, singing, clapping their hands and laughing together on a Friday night and Saturday morning in Beaufort.

Now, getting back to Brett's October blog entry, he concluded by saying that when we are together, we shouldn't be trying to impress each other with how smart we are. We should be asking each other what are you up against or what are you celebrating today. And in the words we share in return, we should hear God offering us comfort and inviting us to see the Spirit moving in our lives and the lives of our friends. That is more than enough reason to get together.

Transition team expects to select new coordinator by January

Marion Aldridge will retire Feb. 11, 2013, as coordinator of CBFSC

The CBFSC Transition/Search Committee continues to work toward its task of identifying and recommending the next CBFSC Coordinator. Resumes have been received from around the country and initial interviews have already been held with a select group of candidates. The committee hopes to have a candidate selected by January 2013 and publicly announced shortly thereafter. The official start date of the next coordinator should fall between mid-February and mid-April. Please uphold this committee in prayer as we continue our work in the months ahead. Furthermore, pray for the transition of our founding coordinator into his unfolding retirement. And lastly, pray for the calling, discernment, and leadership of our next CBFSC coordinator.—Casey Callahan, chair of transition committee



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DECEMBER 2012

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God: I AM WHO I AM

The older I have gotten, the dumber I have become, at least about God. As a child, and then as a teenager, I thought I knew everything there was to know about God. Ah, the arrogance of youth.

Life and the Bible began to humble me. It is not accidental that there are so many names for God in Holy Scripture:

- Judge
- Deliverer
- Counselor
- Shepherd
- Wisdom/Sophia
- Comforter
- Advocate
- Father
- Jesus
- Holy Spirit
- High Priest
- Alpha and Omega
- Rock of Ages
- Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer

My favorite nomenclature for the Almighty has become **I AM WHO I AM**. That means God is not limited to being a King or Lord, but can also be a Servant. God is not limited to being a Father but can also be a Mother. God is not limited to Justice but can also dispense Grace. God is the God of Rivers and Mountains and Outer Space and Inner Atoms. God is always always always more than we think, never exactly what we think, and certainly never less than what we think.

God is lavish, extrava-

gant, unconstrained, untamed and untamable:

- Matthew 6:33: All these things will be added to you.
- John 10:10: I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly.
- John 16:24: Up until now you have not asked anything in my name. Ask now, and you will receive, and your joy will be full.

God is not a paper god, limited to the written word. God is not a nature god, limited to the landscape of hills and trees. God cannot be nailed down and be expected to stay put. Instead, God insists on rising from whatever cave you try to stuff God into. God is not limited to any category humans can devise. When we pay attention to our own Holy Book, it makes this clear:

- John 3:8: The wind blows wherever it pleases.
- Job 38:4: Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations?
- Romans 8:31: If God is for us, who can be against us?

I know God's Greatness and Goodness drive some people crazy, but how else can you read these texts?

- Romans 9:14: I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.

I love God, especially as revealed in Jesus, and for peculiar reasons beyond my ability to understand, God loves me. At least, that is what I believe.



COORDINATOR'S
COLUMN

By Marion Aldridge